LETTERS

TO THE

PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN.

By Mr Fenwick

LETTER II.

On the Circumſtances of the People of Great Britain, relative to the preſent War, is in the Preſs, and will be ſpeedily publiſhed.

LETTERS

TO THE

PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN,

RESPECTING THE

PRESENT STATE

OF THEIR

PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

AWAKE! ARISE! OR, BE FOR EVER FALLEN!

MILTON.

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LETTERS

TO THE

PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN, &c.

LETTER I.

On the Character of the preſent War.

IT is now known that the miniſter of this country is reſolved to carry on the preſent diſaſtrous war, and to try the chance of another campaign. This reſolution of the miniſter is no matter of ſurpriſe to thoſe who are acquainted with the nature of his inclinations, and the qualities of his mind; and deſperate, indeed, would be the ſtate of this nation, if its intereſts were at his ſole diſpoſal. But the inhabitants of Great Britain are not yet divided, if ever they ſhall be, into two claſſes of men, ſuch as exiſt in ſome

unhappy countries, one being the uncontrouled maſter of the other. Great Britain is a nation claiming to be free, claiming the civil rights belonging to men in ſociety, and claiming the terms on which her magiſtrates and miniſters hold the offices of government.

It is, therefore, for you, the people of this country, to conſider the propriety of continuing the war; and if you ſhould be reſolved to put an end to this calamity, happily for your quiet, you poſſeſs the means, without having recourſe to violence, and without appealing to the principles which are the baſis of every political aſſociation, and the laſt reſort of every oppreſſed people.

And, in calling upon you now to conſider your preſent ſituation, my caſe, I confeſs, appears to me to be moſt fortunate. To enter into argument with the venal deſpoiler of the poor, the mean betrayer of his truſt, and the unabaſhed aſſertor of his crimes, is a taſk for which I have no faculties; and the ſpeculation never had an object in it to tempt me to the trial. But you are the injured. And, while I am ſuing to you for a hearing, I am pleading for you. It is your miniſter I impeach; but it is to you whom he has injured

jured that I addreſs myſelf. If it be his paſſion to go on in the deſperate courſe he has taken, it begins to be your deſire to ſtop. You have been deceived, where he was guilty. You have been the ſacrifice, while he was the contriver, of a malignant policy. For him no honeſt mouth can be opened. Reflect on the means, by which, from ſtep to ſtep, you have been conducted to where you now ſtand. Good God! What a ſeries of artifices and crimes does it exhibit on the part of your deſigning guide! And, on your part, what a tumult and ſucceſſion of paſſions! While France was driven to extreme meaſures by the intrigues of her enemies, your anger and hatred were excited againſt her by exaggerated and falſe pictures of her violence. While ſhe was in the actual agonies of a ſtruggle for her own exiſtence, you were alarmed by tales of her ambitious projects, and your fears were excited for your own ſafety. You were called upon to pity the ſufferings of France, and to avert the like ſufferings from yourſelves. Pity and terror were the engines the miniſter firſt ſeized upon; for he well knew feebler engines would have broken down under the enormity of his deſigns.

Having plunged you into the war, other motives were employed by him to foſter your hopes and fears. Indemnity for your waſte of wealth, indemnity for your ruined trade, indemnity for your manifold ſacrifices, was ſpoken of as a thing of courſe, which, in every caſe, you could command. The ſplendour of triumphs was made the familiar object of your view. Glory was the tocſin, if I may borrow a name from a hated enemy, glory was the tocſin by which you were rouſed to fury. The renown of your forefathers' days was to ſink in eſtimation before your exploits; and Agincourt and Creſſey, were to make way, in your annals, for the reduction and ſacking of Paris. Like the witches that betrayed Macbeth, the miniſter hailed you by the ſucceſſive names and titles with which you were to be adorned. Deliverers of France, arbitrators of the fate of Europe, and preſervers of the peace and ſocial order of the human race, were the ſalutations with which he came out to meet you. But even more faithleſs than the deceivers of Macbeth, he leſs regarded the truth and ſacredneſs of his prophecies. Macbeth was Thane of Glamis; and became Thane of Cawdor,

Cawdor, king! Which of your titles have you worn? But you were not ſuffered to enter on your honours. Yet, beware! Though the ſeducing part of Macbeth's fate be not verified in you, beware of the ending of it! And if ſtill, in the midſt of diſgraces, like the unhappy Macbeth, you plume yourſelves on your ſafety, yet remember as ſtrange things may again happen, as that Birnam wood ſhould move to Dunſinane.

Your miniſter continues to aſſert, that your war with France has been and is a juſt and neceſſary war; and this, if there were no miſtake in the aſſertion, would be a true conſolation in the worſt of diſaſters that may yet befal you. Every thing is to be hazarded in an honorable cauſe. Exiſtence is worthleſs when it is to be preſerved by ſhrinking from duty. But if the aſſertion be falſe, your caſe is pitiable. And now, at leaſt, it becomes you to demand of yourſelves, and of each other,

1. *What is the real character of this war: or, in other words, what reaſonable object was to be attained by your interference in the affairs of France?*

2. *What are now your circumſtances, with relation to this war? And,*

3. *What is the reſult of theſe enquiries: that is to ſay; what conduct, on your part, is conſiſtent with your ſafety, your happineſs, and your honour?*

It is too late, in every point of view but one, to conſider the firſt of theſe queſtions, namely, *what is the real character of this war, or what reaſonable object was to be attained by your interference in the affairs of France?*

The conſideration of this queſtion might have furniſhed an argument to diſſuade you from the enterprize; but hardly an argument that, in itſelf, will induce you to retire from the war. It is infinitely more eaſy to be juſt and prudent in the beginning of a wrong courſe than afterward. The face of your conteſt with France is changed. You have motives for going on with your enterprize that you had not for the adopting of it. You have your eminent ſtation in Europe to regain. You have indemnity for laviſhed wealth and ruined commerce to procure. You have many of your allies to pacify and conſole. Your condition is deſperate, and deſperate men regard what ſeems neceſſary rather than what is juſt. It might be better, therefore,

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to proceed without at all examining that firſt queſtion, were it not that, ſeeing the diſgraceful and raſh nature of the tranſaction, you may be the more ſolemnly diſpoſed to ſcrutinize its ruinous effect on yourſelves; and perhaps alſo may be the more diſpoſed to offer the reparation, which it may be in your power to offer to the injured. And why ſhould not this latter influence be hoped for? You have been an honorable as well as a brave people. The Engliſh name was once dear on the continent. It was an unſuſpected pledge of faith. If the principles on which you entered into this war, or if your practices in its proſecution, have caſt a ſtain upon your reputation, let it be wiped off! Deprive not your children of that which was the beſt part of your own heritage.

What was the origin of the war, on your part? The French nation thought proper to delegate to an aſſembly the power of chuſing a form of government that might ſecure her againſt the return of evils from which ſhe had recently freed herſelf. The aſſembly aboliſhed royalty, and raiſed France into a republic. During this period, and after the eſtabliſhing of the republic, France eagerly

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ſought for your friendſhip, and even courted your ſanction, although certainly, on no principle, had you a pretence for interfering in her internal concerns. She received inſults from you, and continued to ſeek your amity. She regarded you as a free nation, and really loved you. In the face of Europe, you offered her new inſults; in the face of Europe, threw embarraſſments in her way; and, ſecretly, you machinated with her enemies againſt her honor, her liberties, and her peace.

The reform ſhe was carrying on in her own boſom was neceſſarily oppoſed to the pride, ſelf-love, and all the unworthy paſſions of men who had been pampered and privileged under the former ſyſtem. But the public will, all that could conſtitute the public will, namely, the conſent, the deſire, of a majority of the people, of an immenſe majority of the people, together with the public force, depending on the public will, were on the ſide of equity, equality, and the republic. The privileged and the pampered, who had remained in France to counteract reform, therefore, turned their thoughts to intrigue, as the ſureſt inſtrument of reſtoring the fatal privileges of their reſpective orders. They aſ-

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ſumed the maſk of patriotiſm. They attempted to take the lead in the career of reform, that they might betray the laborious and, as they were inſolently named by thoſe privileged beings, the *lower claſſes* of the community, and might lead them back to be their ſlaves and the miniſters of their enjoyments. The immediate dependents of the privileged orders, their agents, ſervants, ſycophants, and panders, joined in the intrigue; for they alſo ſcorned equality and labour. The ſelf-intereſted of every kind, caring little for the form of the government, deſiring a republic, or deſiring a monarchy, according to the changes in their own proſpects, were of the number of the ſubſtantial enemies of reform. Among the millions of the populous country of France, there were many who were either ſincerely attached to ſome part or other of the ancient ſyſtem, or were too timid to embrace the dangers and to welcome the exertions belonging to every conflict for freedom; and the ſecret enemies of the public cauſe well knew how to avail themſelves of the reſpective motives of all ſuch. In fine, in a nation that lately had been made up of ſpurious combinations, and corrupted by falſe

maxims, there would be, and there were, no doubt, many baſe men ready to ſell their arms, influence, and capacities, to the moſt profligate and able bidder. But ſuch cauſes of oppoſition to the public happineſs, cannot in themſelves long withſtand the rapid movements of ſuch a revolution as that of France. The timid catch part of the fire with which the people, when excited, purſue their plans. The ſincere are convinced. And the unworthy overwhelmed.

It was not, however, expected by any friend of humanity that France would be left to this courſe, in her affairs. It was expected that the regular and acknowledged tyrannies of Europe would lay hold of any pretence for oppoſing a revolution in men's affairs ſo fatal to their intereſts. Deſpotiſm was in danger. The emperor of Germany and the king of Pruſſia were acknowledged deſpots; and, though their conduct towards France was atrocious, it was an atrocity for which men were prepared. Even the treachery with which thoſe tyrants raiſed levies for war againſt France, while they profeſſed a ſacred regard for her independence, and negotiated for a continuance of her friendſhip, was forgiven as the neceſ-

neceſſary conſequence of courtly politics. But what did the ſober part of Europe, fearing the calamities of a general war, expect of you? Did they expect open war to be declared, by a people profeſſing to be free, againſt a people reſolving to become free? No. What then did they look for? That the cabinet of a court ſcarcely regarded in Europe as a court, but rather as the nominal head of the nation and the repreſentative of its executive power, ſhould ſtart up at once, as if by ſome unknown influence, a cabinet more blood-thirſty, more mean, and more perfidious, than can be found in the examples of ancient Carthage or modern Italy? No. Europe was abaſhed at the prodigy. Even your allies, when they ſought for your gold as the ſinews of their war, when they ſought for your fleets as the means of ſtarving France into a ſurrender, did not expect from you the gratuitous offer of crimes of which they never had ſuſpected you.

And what did France look for, at your hands? Friendſhip; ſincere neutrality; or generous war. Under her old ſyſtem, ſhe had always found you a noble enemy; and aſcribed your noble conduct to your character. In

what way, then, was ſhe deceived reſpecting you? Was there ſomething in her old ſyſtem which being congenial with yours ever withheld you, during its exiſtence, from a war without meaſure, a war of extermination, againſt her? If it were ſo, the French republic could ſee nothing of this union of principles in the government of a nation proud of its freedom and the government of her former deſpots. She, therefore, could not expect you to declare a barbarous, exterminating war againſt her. But what rational ground had ſhe to dread perfidy, diſhoneſty, and meanneſs, on your part? When ſhe ſaw you reſolved on a rupture, ſhe knew your money would be ſent to Germany, to cauſe regular inundations upon her frontiers, of the hordes of ſlaves that inhabit the wilds of that country. But could ſhe expect that you would patronize or permit forgeries of her currency to be carried on among you, for the purpoſes of depreciating her wealth, and ſwindling the trader of the continent, friend or foe, out of his property? She expected the oppoſition of your fleets and armies. But could ſhe foreſee that you would reſpect no principles, deſpiſe no means, in your conteſt with her? Certainly not! It was your virtues ſhe prepared to contend with,

with, although ſhe thought you miſtaken in your adoption of the cauſe of deſpots. It was Britiſh courage, and Britiſh capacity ſhe prepared to oppoſe. Good God! She has ſuffered only from Britiſh crimes!—Britiſh perfidy! Britiſh corruption! Britiſh forgeries! And Britiſh calumnies! La Vendée had not been ſwamped as it were with human blood, but for Britain! The faireſt cities of France had not been turned into ſlaughter-houſes, in which the blood of Frenchmen was cheaper than the blood of brute animals, but for Britain! And, but for Britain, thouſands of unhappy Frenchmen, who are now proſcribed, abandoned, periſhing and rotting in every corner of Europe, might and would be the unoffending, induſtrious, and happy ſons of an independent, glorious, powerful, and free nation!

But it would be injuſtice not to own that ſo far are the greater part of you from being the willing participators of this guilt, that many of you are not even conſcious of its exiſtence. When, by your repreſentatives, you gave your ſanction to the war, you did not authorize your public ſervants, and you did not expect your public ſervants, to degrade you from the moral rank you held in the eyes of

Europe

Europe. But what has, heretofore, been the glory of an Engliſhman, and his paſsport, in every country, to the confidence and eſteem of every honeſt man? Was it his being a member of the greateſt commercial ſtate of the world? No. For he might be a villain notwithſtanding. Nor was it his individual wealth; for, I ſpeak of the confidence placed in the honor of an Engliſhman, by every honourable man, in every country. It was the *frankneſs* of his mind. For this godlike quality, all the ſins of an Engliſhman were forgiven. And he had a ſpecies of privilege to be rude, haughty, raſh, any thing—but *baſe*. And did you authorize the ſervants of your public concerns to barter away this noble character? Oh, no! You too ſenſibly felt its worth. Even ſuch among you as never ſaw a foreign country, nor ever had any hope of ſeeing a foreign country, ſecretly enjoyed the eſteem of foreigners, and would now ſhrink with horror were you told that the name of Engliſhman is at preſent as familiarly coupled with the idea of treachery as it once was with thoſe of truth and honour.

It was your miniſter that bartered away your honour, while he impaired every benefit you poſſeſſed as a nation, encreaſed every burthen

you bore as individuals, and hazarded every comfort that in private life is the ſolace of human nature and the compenſation of the many many evils of ſociety. It was your faithleſs miniſter did this; and the taſk was congenial to his mind. Proſtituted, perjured in ſoul, at a time of life when uſually animal ſpirits ſufficiently preſerve men from mean and cowardly vices without the intervention of much thought or reaſon, practiſed in the arts of corruption and old in infamy before the ſchool-boy's air and gait had left him, that man could not reſiſt the temptations held out to him by the affairs of France. It was a harveſt in which he was eager to put his ſickle. When had the miniſter of a *limited, circumſcribed, popular crown* ſeen ſuch another? What was not to be reaped from it, according to the ſhallow views of courts and courtiers? Extenſion of the influence and powers of the crown at home, acceſſion of dominions abroad, accumulation of wealth to the favoured Benjamins of the political family of the ſtate, but, above all and before all, the inexpreſſible gratification of ſeeing liberty, the natural enemy of courts and courtiers, overthrown and almoſt extirpated from earth, were among the fruits of the harveſt.

veſt. Yet, even theſe, dear as they were to your miniſter's heart, were made more dear by the only means by which they were to be obtained, if ever obtained. To corrupt a whole people, with a poiſon more ſubtle and more to be deplored than the poiſon that deſtroys at once body and mind, was an object to awaken him beyond all former exertions of his faculties. To debauch, pollute, and ſtain thoſe whom he could not ſubdue by honourable means, was food for his ſecret luſts. And to bargain negociate and merchandize for ſucceſſes in war was more deſirable to him and better ſuited to his capacity appetites and paſſions than to win them, if ſo he could have won them, by the ſword.

But although it had happened that your miniſter, inſtead of employing brokers to tranſact your ſchemes againſt France, had carried them on by ſuch means as beſpeak elevation of ſentiment and caſt a luſtre even on crimes, although he had never bought nor attempted to buy the enemy's generals, but bravely and without a retrograde motion had fought his way through France, making the country a deſart before and behind him, and forcing upon the people a government agreeable to his pleaſure,

yet

yet you had not, in that beſt caſe as it ſhould ſeem, obtained an object worthy of your wiſhes as juſt men, nor conſiſtent with your intereſt as ſelfiſh men, if in reality you had been the moſt ſelfiſh race of men on the face of the earth. If ſome inſcrutable neceſſity now compelled you to go on with the war, and you could obtain the privilege of chuſing between conqueſt and defeat, you would gain no more than the privilege belonging to every miſerable condition of human affairs. You would gain no more than the privilege of chuſing between extreme evils. Would you prefer conqueſt? I beſeech you to conſider what then would be your ſituation. Deſpotiſm triumphant, and without a check in Europe! And has you miniſter eſtabliſhed ſo indelible a character for equity and for a love of your juſt rights, that you could afterward ſleep in ſecurity over your liberties? But ſhould he pleaſe to trample them under his feet, who ſhould with-hold his unhallowed limbs? Yourſelves? What! Cooped up within a narrow iſland, over-run by his ſpies to betray and his mercenaries to deſtroy you, would you dare to reſiſt? Would you appeal to the pity, honour, and gratitude of your allies, ſince you have

been the ready and liberal inſtruments of their projects and paſſions? You forget, they are the friends of your miniſter; and, if they ought to be grateful to you for your money, to him they are indebted for you and all your aids. You forget, they would come, if you called them in, they would come reeking with the blood of men falling in the cauſe for which you would then have to contend. Diſaſtrous as is your preſent caſe, it is happineſs to the caſe of your victory over France. Though I think, for I will ſpeak moſt freely to you, that your public ſpirit and your love of freedom is abated ſince miniſters in this country ſtrove to ſtab freedom through the ſides of America, for then you lifted up your voice and bade a ſyſtem of tyranny give way to your reſolution to be free, yet I know you would not barter your remaining liberties for life, were you put to the extremity of relinquiſhing one for the other. Men uſed to any ſhare in the bleſſings of freedom hold them dearer than life. They may be defrauded out of them piecemeal. But every attack on them, whoſe nature and tendency is underſtood, they will reſiſt. Yet, your victories and defeats, in this war, tend to the ſame deſtructive point, to the diſſolution

of

of your national exiſtence. If France be the victor, the continuance of your name and nation is at her will. If you be victorious, your name and nation, in their beſt and deareſt ſenſe, are gone; for, it is not your being a herd and belonging to a maſter, native or foreign, that conſtitutes your ſocial ſtate; and it were better for you to be diſperſed, as a nation, by the French arms, and the remnant of you to exiſt wherever you could find individual reſt and ſome portion of liberty, than to be ſubjected and enſlaved to deſpots, while bearing the name of Britons, and the reputation of being free.

But you went to war with France, to reſtore the bleſſings of ſocial order to the French people. No doubt, the greater part of you thought ſo. But my queſtion to you now is, do you not yet perceive your miſtake? Can any thing be more pernicious to the ſocial order and intereſts of human life, than, by the ſcourge of war, to compel men to live under inſtitutions which they abhor, as being deſtructive of the bleſſings that are the only juſt ends of ſociety? The principle of the ſocial union is, that the will of the majority in a ſociety ſhall be law to the whole; for, until

men ſhall be capable of perceiving moral truth, without miſtake, and as it exiſts in the nature of things, there is no other principle on which they can act together, unleſs, they be ſubjected to the will of a maſter, and be wholly guided by the principle of fear. And what concerns, what intereſts, what objects, or affections, can a people be ſuppoſed to have who are permitted to have no will? It is a hard condition of human affairs that he who is the honeſt and enlightened member of a ſociety muſt nevertheleſs ſubmit to the erroneous will of the ſociety, if he cannot by argument convince his fellow citizens of their error. But how cruel and immoral is the policy which extends inſtead of labouring to narrow the apparently neceſſary evils of ſociety! Of all wretches, his ſtate is juſtly held to be moſt pitiable, whoſe condition is at the diſpoſal of another man's will. And how enormous is the guilt that, in one act, would ſubject millions of men to this ſervitude! If the majority of the French people, therefore, had choſen a republican form of government, and of this you will hereafter have ſufficient evidence if you think you now have reaſon to doubt it, you were inconſiſtent with your profeſſions, in

violating the ſacred right which France had in common with every nation on earth, on the pretence of offering her a more perfect form of government than that ſhe had preferred. Be candid, and own this part of your miſtake. The commiſſion of crimes, above all of moſt flagitious crimes, can never lead to a ſalutary object. To do evil that good may enſue, is a conduct that in private life is juſtly odious. But it is a thouſand fold more deteſtable in public concerns. If this holy maxim could be a ſubject of diſpute with you, your conduct in the affairs of France, and its conſequences to France and to yourſelves, ſeem too ſeverely calculated to convince you of its truth. You deſigned to confer a benefit on France. I ſpeak ſincerely of your object as a nation, and not of the objects of corrupt men among you. Yet, you could not but be conſcious that the means of your effecting your purpoſe were of the moſt immoral kind. But you fondly believed the end would ſanctify the means. What, then, have you done, in this courſe? The cities, villages, and fields of France, if they were endued with ſenſe, would bear witneſs to the horrors you have occaſioned. You, thought, alſo, you were conſulting your own

public

public welfare, in this unhappy war; and your preſent circumſtances bear all the external marks of ſome univerſal infatuation among you, although they be no more than a ſmall part of the conſequences of your error.

But the curſe of the end you deſigned in your interference in the affairs of France altogether correſponded with the curſe of the means. France choſe to form itſelf into a republic. And ſhe choſe wiſely. When we are ſpeaking of a nation and of a people, we do not ſpeak of men who claim the privilege of wearing embroidered ſtars upon their breaſts, or of walking with white ſticks in their hands, or of their aſſociates, or dependents. We ſpeak of the maſs of the people, of the multitude who labour, and who labour for the former as well as for themſelves. This is the quarter to which we are to turn our views. And every ſound political ſpeculation has the *people*, in this ſenſe of the word, for its object, and the people only; for it is not pretended that any other claſs of ſociety has any value, otherwiſe than as it is ſuppoſed to be fitteſt to adminiſter the affairs of the people, and to be conducive to their happineſs. But the *people* in France are benefited by the republican form

form of government ſhe has adopted. They no longer labour for food, and raiment, and ſhelter, as if thoſe included all human bleſſings, and there were no moral capacities in man; nor are they now in want of thoſe mere neceſſaries of life, as if they were not the natural fruits of induſtry, but were really the gratuitous offering to the labourer of lazy pomp, and titled pride. If they do not enjoy the untaxed fruits of their induſtry, they at leaſt enjoy a ten fold larger ſhare of them, than under their old ſyſtem, or than they could enjoy under any monarchical government whatever; and they have not the mortification of ſeeing the ſhare dealt out to them with impudent declarations, that it is a benefit reſulting from government. If the ſyſtem of one man's labouring for another is ſtill tolerated among them, their public ſervants do, however, exert capacity and diſplay a love of the people, in ſearching for the means of mitigating the rigour of that hard ſyſtem. If the neceſſity of human affairs has ſubjected them to ſevere regulations during a difficult and embarraſſing period, the neceſſity, in that caſe, was ſet in action by your unhappy policy, and they are freeing themſelves from the ſcourge with a ſpeed that laughs at your cold

cold calculations. If the *requiſition* call a man out, to die for his country, he knows that his life could not have been applied to ſo noble a purpoſe, had he lived beyond the common term of human life in private exertions for the happineſs and honour of his ſpecies. If the *requiſition* call on a man to give his children to the nation's cauſe, he has no need, becauſe of a partial, cruel, ſelfiſh, and corrupt ſyſtem, to thank God, that he is relieved from the care the anguiſh of providing for them. He is not inſulted, as though he were a ſlave, by the repreſentative to whom he has delegated the exerciſe of his public functions. He is not diſtinguiſhed from him by opprobrious and diſgraceful epithets. He is not conſidered by him, as being born for his uſes. Whatever be done by ſelfiſh, ambitious, and miſtaken men among the repreſentatives of the people, the majority, he knows, are ſincerely and ſucceſsfully occupied in the public cauſe; in driving before them, on the theatre of war, the people's breathleſs fugitive enemies; in cultivating the arts of peace at home; in loading the fields of France with corn and vegetables fit for the uſe of man, which before were ſet apart to pamper horſes and dogs for ſome tyrant's

rant's pleaſure, or to pamper the idle, laſcivious, fat, and uſeleſs carcaſes of prieſtly drones; and, above all, of reſtoring the people to the rank in creation, from which deſpots and demons have degraded them. Do you want to reſtore order in France? There is no enemy of it there but what is hired at your coſt. Do you want to propagate morality in France? The moſt cruel of vices have been engendered there by your perfidious agents. Withdraw your ſpies, and the contamination that has ſpread through too much of the country and reached too many of the inhabitants will ſoon be purged away. But if it be your deſire to give a king to France, nobles to France, titled prieſts to France, privileged men to France, I grant you there are no means for the accompliſhing of your purpoſe. Neither your ſword nor your policy will bring you nearer to that end. France deteſts monarchy, France deteſts nobles, titled prieſts, privileged men of every kind, France deteſts a ſyſtem debaſing the human mind, enfeebling its faculties, defeating the purpoſes of ſocial union among men, and ſubjecting the laborious part of mankind to all the want, anxieties, and wretchedneſs which are the natural penalties of ſloth, and giving

to the idle, profuſe, and unprofitable, all the natural fruits of induſtry.

It is true, that the preſent war *is a war waged for the intereſts of morality, and for the well-being of mankind.* But it is your enemy who is on the ſide of thoſe ſacred intereſts. And your ſword is ſtained with the blood of the defenders of the human race.

But you went to war with France, to preſerve the bleſſings of ſocial order at home; and this, at leaſt, you ſay you had a right to do. Unqueſtionably, a people have a right to preſerve to themſelves the ſocial inſtitutions that may appear to them wiſeſt and beſt. But it would be a ſtrange expoſition of the term right, to ſay they had a right to be unjuſt, fooliſh, and ridiculous. If the object you deſire be juſt, your right to that object cannot ſuppoſe your right to purſue it by means that will defeat the end. And your right to preſerve your ſocial inſtitutions includes in it the right of France to do the ſame. Therefore, a right to model the government of France could not be among the juſt means of governing yourſelves.

It ſeems to be no better than extravagance of conduct, ſeriouſly to ſtate and argue upon ſuch

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ſimple truths. But ſuch is the abſurdity of your policy in this unhappy queſtion, that, to expoſe it, is to go back to the firſt leſſons of political childhood. Your policy is throughout in oppoſition to your pretenſions, and both to the object of them. You interfere in the internal affairs of France, on the principle that a nation has a right to preſerve the bleſſings of her own inſtitutions: you profeſs to maintain the intereſts of morality and ſocial order, by violation after violation of the only ſafe principles of human conduct, and by unlooſing all the juſt ties of ſociety: and you have been moſt aſſiduous to illuſtrate the wiſdom of your own inſtitutions, in anſwer to thoſe who have queſtioned their wiſdom, by ſuffering public miſchiefs to be puſhed beyond all common bounds, as if to ſhew to what lengths they may go, with your conſent, and under the ſanction of your authority.

If, therefore, in the firſt inſtance, there was no reaſonable object to be obtained by your interference in the affairs of France, are you now deſirous of continuing the war for ſecondary objects, and ſuch as may have ariſen in the courſe of it? But what are they? Let them be examined; for, to act with undefined

views, on any occaſion, is folly; on the preſent, madneſs.

Such motives, I think, can relate only to the two following ſubjects: to the indemnity for your own loſſes, which you may yet hope to obtain by future ſucceſſes; and to the line of conduct which it becomes you to purſue reſpecting the countries conquered by France.

On the ſubject of indemnity, it might be ſufficient to remark, that, unleſs you ſhall find the origin of the quarrel to have been juſt and honorable on your part, to fight for indemnity is to fight for plunder; and, although you had a juſt claim to indemnity, if now all other motives are for peace, to continue fighting for indemnity is to ſtake the eſſential permanent intereſts of the nation for thoſe that are inferior and temporary. But there are other more important conſiderations belonging to the ſubject of indemnity, which never are taken into the calculations of ſtateſmen; and I cannot perſuade myſelf altogether to paſs them by, although it is no part of the deſign of this ſhort addreſs to diſcuſs them at the length they well deſerve.

You demand indemnity. For what? Conſider the nature of your loſſes. It is not the money

money you have expended that is the firſt and greateſt of theſe ; nor your loſs of trade ; nor any other ſacrifice of a like nature. In this war, you have ſuſtained the loſs of your honour. In this war, you have vitiated yourſelves generally, and have greatly perverted your ſenſe and feeling of right and wrong. You have debauched the morals of individuals among you beyond former examples, by drying up the regular ſources of their induſtry, and alluring them by enormous bounties into your camps at home and abroad. And, finally, you have caſt away the lives of thouſands of theſe your once valuable fellow-citizens.

What indemnity do you demand for theſe loſſes ? What can France give in return for your honour, if, in the nature of things, ſhe could have been the guilty cauſe of your diſgrace ? Nothing. But why, under theſe calamitous circumſtances, will you not conſider the whole of your caſe ? Paſt miſtake is no excuſe, no motive for preſent miſtake. And no condition of human life is out of the reach and beyond the efficacy of human wiſdom and human fortitude. As none but yourſelves could degrade your name among nations, ſo

it belongs only to you to reſtore it. That is yours, whatever elſe be gone: ſince, to be convinced of your error, to acknowledge and to forſake it, is to vindicate your honor.

The ſame means can alone expel the poiſon your errors have circulated in your own boſom. Truſting to the perfidious account of your miniſter and his partizans reſpecting the tranſactions of France, and exaggerating in in your own minds the evils attending a great and virtuous revolution, your diſtinguiſhed proverbial jealouſy of power and of the perſons holding the high offices of your authority has been changed into a jealouſy of freedom, and of the friends of freedom. Malignant paſſions have been familiar to you. Miſtruſt, anger, and an intolerant ſpirit, have crept into the humbleſt, and heretofore the moſt innocent circles of ſociety in the nation. In a word, your generous character is changed. But ſuch a condition is worſe than open contention with arms. It is more fatal to private happineſs and public virtue. It diſunites individuals from each other, and from the community. It defeats the wholeſome purpoſes of ſociety. And is a ſtate that precedes that, in which none are free, and few deſire to be free;

and, in which thoſe who feel they have loſt a country, have loſt with it all hope of reſtoring it. Look back to the ſentiments you have entertained in former times, and conſider if, in thoſe times, a miniſter had been ſhameleſs enough to have acted as your preſent miniſter has acted, what you would have done. But now, the yoke ſeems neceſſary to you. And how is it that the miniſter has prepared your minds for it, but by firſt introducing the ſtate I have been deſcribing? Do you, then, talk of indemnity for ſuch miſchiefs? There is none in nature. And, while the war laſts, there is not even a peaceable remedy for them.

After conſidering a ſtate of ſuch enormous and general depravity as this to which you are reduced, particular vices reſulting from the war might be diſregarded in eſtimating the nature of indemnity; yet, the injury done to the morals of individuals belonging to the moſt valuable part of the community cannot be paſſed over in ſilence. War debauches the manners of the countryman, the mechanic, and the manufacturer. It is not in the field that war ſpends all its rage againſt the human race. Thoſe who eſcape the edge of the

the ſword and diſeaſe are corrupted in their inclinations and habits; and return to their homes, to ſpread the vices of camps and garriſons among their neighbours and former companions. But, in this war, it has not been the idle and diſſolute only who have recruited your armies, as is ordinarily the caſe. Sober and induſtrious families, fathers and their ſons, have been driven, by the univerſal diſtreſs of the country, to take ſhelter from abſolute want in the ſufferings of a ſoldier's wretched life. But for this miſchief, neither, is there any indemnity; and all you can do is, to put a ſtop to it by peace.

Do you hope to receive indemnity for the lives of your ſons, fathers, friends, and countrymen ſlain in this war? You well know the wealth of the combined nations of the world cannot afford it. Population is the growth of peace and proſperity; and, even in ſtates which feel little of the ſcourge of war, and whoſe affairs are conducted with more wiſdom and equity than thoſe of reſtleſs, depraved, and ambitious kingdoms, there ſtill exiſt too many errors, hitherto common to all governments, to retard the increaſe of the great family of mankind. Population, therefore,

fore, is of ſlow growth; and the ſtate that loſes one hundred of its members by untimely death, as in the caſe of war, would receive no compenſation if half the globe were, in conſequence of the loſs, ſubjected to its power.

For what other of your loſſes will you demand indemnity? For your waſte of treaſure? For the ruin of your commerce? Or, finally, for the danger of your ſituation? For the firſt of theſe, you may receive indemnity in kind, when your enemy ſhall be diſpoſed to give it. For the ſecond, there can be no indemnity. The commerce of nations is not transferred like the trade of a ſhop, at the will of the parties concerned in it, and a compenſation in money for the loſs of commerce muſt be inadequate; for, if the gaining of wealth were the only effect of commerce, it would be prejudicial inſtead of being ſerviceable to a nation. Beſide, that no quantity of money, which in itſelf is barren, is adequate to the value of a branch of commerce, which is a fruitful ſource of wealth. But peace is eſſential to the proſperity of commerce; and, when it is once deeply wounded by war, there needs not much to make the injury irrepara-

ble. For the laſt of theſe objects, there is no indemnity. No man is ſo ignorant and forward as to aſſert that you can receive a compenſation for the danger you incur, in this war. Even your miniſter calls it a war of neceſſity, thereby endeavouring to excuſe the exceſs of the danger. But, though he perceives enough to put him upon paliating the evil, he ſees not the extremity of it. Miniſters are more blind than other men to the circumſtances of a nation, when her concerns are verging to a ſerious iſſue. Their pride, their reliance on a power that has buoyed them up under many paſt blunders, the real diſtance at which they are from all the important part of the affairs they idly pretend to manage, all conſpire to ſhut them effectually out from a true knowledge of the peril. We need but look at the moments preceding great revolutions, to underſtand and own this truth. And does your miniſter's knowledge of your affairs, or even of his own partial intereſts, make a caſe to be excepted from the obſervation? He who is too ſubtle to believe any man honeſt, and who takes the reverſe of every honeſt advice for truth, he, who ſees foreign tranſactions as he does

does domeſtic concerns, through the medium of ignorant and low-bred ſpies, is he qualified to proceed out of the common courſe of common miniſters? Beware how you rely on that! Beware how you attempt to ſtand with him! He hinted at your real danger. But he did not believe it. He conſidered it only as a motive fit to excite you, under your preſent unwillingneſs to continue the war. He told you France has ſingled you out for her reſentment. It is too true. Be appriſed of it. The more awful the truth is, the more neceſſity is there of its being ſeen without a covering of any ſort. France has ſuffered ſuch dreadful evils from your interference in her government, and has now ſo many provocations to revenge, that it is ſcarcely in human virtue, in human forbearance, to pardon you. Does not your miniſter now inſult and vilify her repreſentatives, while they are employed in healing the wounds he has inflicted? Is he not now meditating new treaſons againſt them? While they are gathering into the boſom of the country the inhabitants of la Vendée, whom he had deceived and abandoned, is not he uſing all means that mortified rancour can deviſe and meanneſs

adopt, to allure them to the commiſſion of new wrongs againſt their relenting country? But if France could forgive the paſt in you, is ſhe to go on forgiving, till ſhe herſelf be betrayed and deſtroyed? Or, is ſhe to diſtinguiſh between you and your miniſter? If any man among you were to call on France to do ſo, your miniſter would try and execute him for treaſon. Shall I, then, dare to ſay, that the diſtinction would be juſt? Or, ſhall I not rather view another part of the ſubject, and ſay, that France vehement by nature and incenſed beyond common meaſure, thinks of no ſuch diſtinction. She has excuſed the *people* of the Auſtrian Netherlands, of Dutch Flanders, of the Seven United Provinces, of Italy, Spain, and Germany, becauſe ſhe knew them to be under the dominion of tyrants, and to be conſtrained in their acts by military force. But why excuſe you? Your government is the organ of your will. Your miniſter is your ſervant, and not your maſter. Shrink not from this argument! Argue with yourſelves as France will argue with you. Snatch the moment that is left you. Inſtruct your repreſentatives. Call on the organ of your executive power. If they and

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he be not loſt to feeling, they will adviſe and he will adopt ſuch meaſures as will yet ſave a nation that long was the friend of mankind from diſſolution, from political extermination.

It would be folly to waſte ſo many words on the ſubject of indemnity, at a time when, if you repel the enemy from your own ſhores, it will be all you can do, were it not that even now many among you look for a turn in your affairs, and calculate on the indemnity to be afforded you by the acquiſition of the Weſt-India iſlands and other territories. Such viſions, no doubt, are monſtrous. Yet, what but ſuch viſions are held out by the declarations and conduct of your miniſter and his partiſans? If he can overthrow the republican government of France, if he can reſtore monarchy in France, he can conquer France, and if he can conquer France, he can adjuſt the terms of his indemnity. The queſtions of conqueſt and indemnity are reſoved into one. And, to receive one particle of indemnity, is to march to Paris with thoſe ſymbols of deſpotiſm, the ancient crown and ſceptre, in your hands.

But you, as well as every people living under a monarchical form of government, are,

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by your condition, ſhut out from even the poor benefit of ſuch indemnity, as the evils of war are ſuſceptible of. To you, war is always an uncompenſated evil. And all that can be ſaid, at the concluſion of *a neceſſary and ſucceſsful foreign war*, is, that you have in ſome ſort eſcaped, and that it is well you are out of it. You bear the burthens of the war, you run the hazards of the war, but the indemnity is foreign to your intereſts. You ſow, if war can be compared with ſuch divine work as throwing ſeed into the fertile earth to procure ſuſtenance and enjoyment for man, you ſow where others reap. What, in the preſent caſe, could you receive at the end of the war? Money, or an addition of territory. But both muſt go into the hands of your miniſter, and may become weapons againſt your ſafety. The very money that goes into the ſame hands through the grant of your repreſentatives is fatal to you; and the burthen of raiſing it is the ſmalleſt part of the injury you ſuſtain in the tranſaction. Every ſhilling that is over and above the true neceſſities of the ſtate, is a poiſon that kills you. Of the ſame nature is foreign territory annexed to your chief magiſtracy; excepting, inaſmuch

inaſmuch as the danger of this exceeds the former. In a pure and equitable republic, as the people are not ſubject to their repreſentatives, but theſe are the mere medium of their public functions, ſo if a country be added to the republic, ſuch country is not ſubject to it, but aſſociated with it, and is in the ſame family, Even there, however, the caſe of countries incorporating in this way demands diſcuſſion, before its utility can be aſſerted. But the plan of uniting two diſtinct countries, by the tie of a chief magiſtrate common to both, is as unworthy the name of policy as the invention of Procruſtes's bed, if it be not abſolutely as cruel. In the midſt of misfortunes, be not amuſed with abſurdities. What profit or what honour do you gather from the crowns placed on any man's brows? But, if thoſe crowns are of ſo contemptible a kind, even in the eſtimation of the worſhippers of crowns, that they have been offered to every adventurer, and have been worn by adventurers, what is not your diſgrace? And if you pay a price for ſuch crowns, of greater amount than would ſerve to purchaſe all the lands and all the live-ſtock they repreſent, who does not laugh at your folly, while you

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plume yourſelves on your ſucceſs and glory? Will you outſtrip the ridiculous of romance? And ſolemnly prepare yourſelves for a banquet more farcical than that of Sancho Pancha, in his iſland of Barrataria?

We come now to conſider the conduct which juſtice demands of you, reſpecting the countries ſubdued by France: and that, at once, reſolves itſelf into this ſimple queſtion—What are the wiſhes of the people of thoſe countries?

If thoſe nations were held in a ſtate of ſlavery by foreign powers, previous to the arrival of the French, you will not be the worſt of enemies to them, and render abortive the happy chance which has freed them from a foreign yoke? But that is the exact caſe of the greater part of the countries reduced by the French arms. No man will deny that the Auſtrian Netherlands were held in a ſtate of reluctant ſubjection to the houſe of Auſtria. Almoſt every boy at ſchool knows the noble efforts the people of that nation have made to free themſelves from the yoke. And there does not exiſt among you a friend of humanity whoſe heart has not been agitated by their fortunes. Will it be ſaid, notwithſtanding,

that they do not chuſe to be united, as a department, to France? What then? The queſtion is not changed. Do they chuſe to be again reduced to their former ſtate of ſervitude? That queſtion is anſwered by facts. They contended obſtinately againſt the tyrant Joſeph II. And, until they were betrayed by the ariſtocracy among them, they contended alſo againſt the tyrants who ſucceeded Joſeph. Were they, afterward, reconciled to the Auſtrian domination? Why, then, did they not aid their maſter in his conteſt with France, at the time, at leaſt, when the immediate object was to keep the French out of their country? Why did they ſuffer him fruitleſsly, although in moſt pathetic terms, to bewail their folly, in reducing him to the neceſſity of leaving them to their fate?* The inhabitants of the Auſtrian Netherlands are a thinking, ſober, induſtrious, and honeſt people; and, though probably they are ſtill attached to their own ariſtocracy (for, what people eaſily forget the love they bear to the errors of their own inſtitutions?) they wiſh to be delivered from a foreign tyranny. If they do not underſtand what it is to be altogether free, they deſire to be free after their own faſhion; or, rather, to

be a little enſlaved after their own faſhion. They are, therefore, eaſily diſpoſed of. They will either unite themſelves to France, or chuſe a government of their own; and, in either caſe, it will be monſtrous in you to arm yourſelves againſt their will. In negociating with France, you may inſiſt on her leaving the countries ſhe has reduced, *in her own defence*, to the exerciſe of their indefeaſible right of chuſing their own government. But you will not inſiſt upon the uſurpations of their former maſters being reſtored. Happily for mankind, if you will commit ſuch folly, it will not be a profitable folly, even in the ſight of thoſe who have looſe notions of profit; for, the time is already entered upon, when none of the nations of Europe will be parcelled out as appertaining to the rent-roll of royal, ducal, epiſcopal, or other tyrannical families.

The caſe of Dutch Flanders, and of the Seven United Provinces, no way materially differs from that of the Auſtrian Netherlands. They were ſubject to a maſter who was born among them, it is true; but his dominion over them was, in fact, the medium of a foreign uſurpation. It was a tyranny of that extraordinary kind to which the unhappy Poles have been ſo

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long ſubject; and, while the Dutch had at home a government for the actual adminiſtration of their affairs, they had a government abroad for the managing and controuling of their domeſtic government, according to its ambitious, revengeful, and profligate deſires. But this unnatural order of things did not reſult from the choice of the people of that country. They roſe up in arms againſt the odious tyranny. And, had they not been betrayed by ſome infamous perſons holding offices of truſt among them, their reſiſtance had been effectual, notwithſtanding the interference of Great Britain, and notwithſtanding the lawleſs invaſion of their country, by that man who, in that deed, ſufficiently proved how capable he was of the rapines, murders, and treacheries, which have ſince been plotted and perpetrated by him.

Savoy alſo was ſubject to a foreign tyranny. But ſhe had no means of reſiſtance, excepting ſuch as belong to every unarmed and poor people. And, although theſe natural means of ſelf defence be ſufficient to redeem men from the moſt reduced ſtate of ſervitude, when the mind is excited and reſolved, Savoy in herſelf was without hope, the people being ener-

vated by ſuperſtition, and, from their cradles, taught by prieſts to believe, that God and nature had doomed them to ſervitude.

But the people of Savoy, now that they are acquainted with another condition of life, fear nothing ſo much as the poſſibility of being given up to their old maſters. This is not to be underſtood, it is true, of every individual, nor equally of every part of Savoy; but it would be found to be the caſe of three fourths of the people, if they were aſſembled to decide, man by man, on their future political ſtate. And, even among the moſt ignorant and ſuperſtitious of the people of Savoy, in the parts bordering on Italy and the Valais, who continue to have conſiderable intercourſe with the prieſts of thoſe wretched countries, the majority would be reconciled to the principles of their late revolution, if they could be weaned from their religious ſuperſtitions: or if France could have preſerved her former love of religious errors with her preſent love of freedom.

I know this ſtatement of the temper of the people of Savoy does not correſpond with the reports of your miniſter's ſpies in that country. It is, nevertheleſs, true. And how ſhould it be otherwiſe? Heretofore, the inhabitants of

Savoy,

Savoy, with the exception of prieſts, and of the Savoyard noble, and the Italian noble, and their Italian dependents, paſſed their lives in extreme labour and extreme want: for, poor as they were, the king, their maſter, drew a revenue from the fruits of their labour, and their nobles and prieſts fattened by plundering them. At preſent, they are relieved from thoſe depredators; they feed their flocks, and cultivate their lands, and pay no tythes, nor feudal dues, nor any portion of the fruits of their labour, on any other uſeleſs pretence. The face of the country already proclaims the change. The people are no longer meagre, and conſumed with anxiety. Enter their cottages, and you ſee every thing in abundance. Converſe with them, and they tell you, the revolution in their affairs appears to them a dream: ſo far is their condition from any thing they ever expected in this life. But men do not prefer want, diſeaſe, and ſubjection to the contempt inſults and injuries of other men neither ſo honeſt nor ſo valuable as themſelves, to plenty and freedom, when they know the difference; or when they diſcover, that thoſe evils which are called the neceſſary evils of ſociety are neceſſary only to a ſtate of ſervitude,

and

and are to be baniſhed from the face of the earth, by the will, the courage, and the power of man. And this degree of knowledge has happily reached the greater part of the people of Savoy.

I am not ſo well acquainted with the temper and wiſhes of the Italians and Spaniards, whoſe country is now in the poſſeſſion of the French, as I am with thoſe of the people I have been deſcribing. But your duty is to conſult their will, whatever that be. And, in this plain path, you will find no embarraſſment on this part of your conduct. Let the people of all the reduced countries be aſſembled reſpectively; and let them determine what they alone have a right to diſcuſs.

It is true, the policy of courts will ſpeak another language to you, which language will be alſo that of your miniſter, if you conſult him and them. But your ſituation is too eminently dangerous to permit you to conſult the paſſions of corrupt men. If you will continue the war, to feed their paſſions, you will not want motives, certainly. But that is a caſe I cannot ſuppoſe. I am only in ſearch of ſuch motives as may be found in your regard for your own intereſts, and in that love of juſtice

tice which powerfully influences the maſs of the people of every country: for the maſs of the people never are ſincerely detached from a love of their fellow men; although, it be the common policy of their tyrants to detach man from man, and their common folly to believe the ſcheme accompliſhed.

I have been ſincere, in endeavouring to ſtate all the objects of the war which I can ſuppoſe to have had any great effect upon you, either as they led you firſt to approve of the war, or may have induced you to ſubmit to it ſince. Yet, a real difficulty meets me here. Had the pretences of the miniſter reſpecting the war been uniform, the ſubject might have been examined in the ſhape he had choſen to have given it. Not that I feel any neceſſity of combating his pretenſions. But, as he has unhappily deceived you in this moſt calamitous tranſaction, it is in ſome of his profeſſions that your real deſires are to be found. And I have taken ſuch as appear to have, in fact, governed you. To reſtore the bleſſings of order to a people ſubjected to a ferocious party, on the call of the majority of that people, to prevent the fierce ſpirit of that party from laying waſte your own land, were objects calculated to captivate

tivate your affections, and, I am perſuaded, occaſioned your ſtrongeſt if not your only motives, throughout the whole proſecution of this war. It is therefore that, ſelecting theſe, I have foreborne even to name the various, ſhifting, multiplied pretexts of your miniſter for this war. Many of them, you will not even call to mind again. And many of them, in their birth and during the time of their ſervices, were employed rather to give a colour to the miniſter's corrupt partiſans in and out of parliament, than directly and ſeriouſly to intereſt you. To hunt theſe through their windings, would be a woeful ſacrifice of time, at a period when every thing tends to the deciding of your fate, and when you have few moments left to influence the deciſion. Yet, ſome of theſe pretexts may be uſefully reſcued, for a moment, from oblivion. And a very few words will ſuffice for that purpoſe.

France declared war againſt Great Britain: ſhe alſo declared war generally againſt all tyrants, in behalf of every oppreſſed people: and, moreover, ſhe declared the navigation of the river Scheld to be the common right of every country through which it ran.

On

On the firſt ground, your miniſter contended that the war was a war of immediate and ſtrict ſelf-defence: on the ſecond, that it was a war for the vindication of the injured rights of nations: and, on the laſt ground, that it was a war in fulfilment of your juſt engagements to your ally the Dutch. What was the fact? The firſt pretext was a veil too thin when it was ſpread before you; and has ſince dropt to pieces in your ſight. France heſitated too long to declare war againſt Great Britain; for, by her reluctance, ſhe gave opportunity to a perfidious man to plant his ſpies in all her towns and villages, and to lay the trains of intrigue which have kept the nation and her repreſentatives in a ſtate of alarm, and have begotten a neceſſity for meaſures hateful to humanity. France was behind-hand in her declaration of war againſt Great Britain; for war had, from the birth of the republic, been declared againſt her by the cabinet of St. James, according to all the flimſy modes of declaring war by courts, with the ſingle exception of mounting a harlequin on horſeback, attended by other harlequins, to tell women and children of it with trumpets. War had been declared more ſubſtantially, by the cabinet of St.

James, in endeavouring to ſtarve France; more provokingly, in offering her petty inſults; and more baſely, in machinating againſt her independence with the conſpirators of Coblentz and Pilnitz.

And was this wicked, eager, offenſive, unprovoked war turned into a war of poſitive ſelf defence, of abſolute neceſſity, and of clear juſtice, by the open and fair act of France, in decreeing war againſt you, previouſly to her repelling your aggreſſions? What, then! Her honourable and virtuous carriage, in anſwer to your perfidies, is become your juſtification? Oh, ſhame! Let us hide, from you, this part of your diſgrace, if, indeed, it be yours.

The ſecond of theſe pretexts of your miniſter was as thin as the former. By the decree of the 19th of November, 1792, the French did not hold out protection to a faction in any ſtate; but, to *every oppreſſed people calling for aid.* Without diſcuſſing the provocations to this decree, offered by the interference of deſpots in the concerns of France, I maintain that it was a decree worthy of a great and virtuous people. Nothing is plainer than the diſtinction between a people living contentedly under a tyrannical government, from the prejudices

judices of their educations and lives, and a people ruled in a manner repugnant to their feelings, by a military force in the hands of their government, whether native or foreign. The former, is one of the unhappieſt caſes in human affairs; but no other remedy can or ought to be applied to it, than the mild progreſs and effect of reaſon. The latter, is the caſe of an armed outlaw at your throat, while you are defenceleſs; and calls for the interference of every honeſt man on earth. To this latter caſe, was the decree of the 19th of November, 1792, directed. And it becomes the people every where to hunt down ſuch military tyrannies as that decree was deſigned to combat, with no leſs conſtancy than they have employed in hunting down wild animals of prey who would have fed on man till they had extinguiſhed his race.

The diſpute relative to the Scheld ſcarcely furniſhed a pretext for negociation; much leſs, for war. That the navigation of a river flowing through two countries is common to both, is a plain propoſition. And, it will, hereafter, be reluctantly credited, that the reſtoring to one of the two countries the common benefit of

of which it had been robbed was made a ſerious cauſe of war againſt France.

But if this had been a queſtion to have exerciſed the counſels of two or three nations, it would have been wiſe to determine it in that way; and France was, at that time, diſpoſed to negociate with Great Britain on any ſubject and on any terms conſiſtent with her ſafety and independence. How has this point turned out, having become a queſtion for the deciſion of the ſword? Your miniſter, in fighting for the Scheld, has loſt the Seven United provinces *for ever!*

I do not affect to quarrel with this diſpoſition of that queſtion. Let thoſe who think themſelves aggrieved by it, take up the cauſe. I have only to ſhew the meagre unſubſtantial nature of your miniſter's pretexts.

J. F.

January 28, 1795.